

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes

March 16, 2016

Commissioners Present: Christine Carney, Yawa Degboe, Mel Goldsipe, Sharon Grossman, Gary Horowitz, Christopher Huvos, Bill Logan

Commissioners Absent: Sheri Baron, Marlissa Briggett, Ghandi DiFiglia, Jorge Loayza, Nick Minton

Guests: Christine Bongiorno, Joe Curro, Allison Norton, Steve Revilak, Bob Sprague, Miriam Stein, Duncan Vinson

1) Citizen's Open Forum: None present.

2) Warrant Article 24

Christine Bongiorno, Director of Health and Human Services, reported that on Monday, March 14, 2016 a meeting was held to discuss Article 24. Present at the meeting were Christine Bongiorno, Jim Feeney (Board of Health), Adam Chapdelaine (Town Manager), Capt. James Curran (Police Dept.), and Doug Heim (Town Counsel). It will be the recommendation of the group to the Board of Selectmen to create a task force to explore the issue of camping on public property and how the bylaw will affect homeless individuals in Arlington. The Board will be asked to vote no action and revisit the warrant article for Town Meeting 2017. The task force will report back to the Board of Selectmen in November, 2016. Commissioner Logan informed the group of the Dept. of Justice's statement that such ordinances are illegal, and he will forward the information to Christine Bongiorno and the Board of Selectmen.

Christine Bongiorno gave an update on the Arlington Food Pantry. They will be moving to a new building and will consider putting in public laundry facilities on the ground floor. Commissioner Goldsipe recommended that the task force consider other ideas like this as they work on the public camping issue.

3) February Minutes

The minutes were approved with corrections.

4) Correspondence Received

AHRC received an email notifying us that a community member will be filing an official complaint regarding an LGBTQIA+ human rights violation regarding messages on the Arlington List. The complaint itself has not arrived yet.

5) Incidents and Complaints

The APD forwarded to the Commission two reports of hate incidents. One concerning the vandalism of a Black Lives Matter sign in front of the Church of Our Saviour, Episcopal. Commissioner Logan contacted Rev. Malia Crawford and asked how the Commission could be of assistance. She agreed with Commissioner Logan that a public statement from the Commission would be an appropriate course of action at this time.

The second report was concerning an Arlingtonian who received hate mail after writing a letter to a newspaper. Commissioner Logan contacted the reporting party, informed them of the AHRC, and let her know we are available to assist her in any way. The case is currently being handled by the APD Detectives.

Commissioner Goldsipe made a motion for the AHRC to make a public statement denouncing these acts and for Commissioners Goldsipe and Huvos to draft the public statement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Logan and passed unanimously.

6) Commission Opening

Christine Bongiorno and Commissioners Carney and Goldsipe interviewed two candidates. There are two remaining candidates to interview.

7) Budget: AHRC has about \$1200 left unencumbered.

8) LGBTQIA+ Survey

Commissioner Goldsipe reported that the online survey has 350 responses and has been notified of no paper surveys received so far. The online survey will close mid-April and then be moved over to the town's account to access advanced diagnostics. Survey analysis will be on hold until after the Trans 101 workshop and the gender identity bylaw panel discussion.

9) Trans 101 Workshop

Commissioner Goldsipe reported that the workshop will be held Wednesday, April 6, 7-9 pm in the Selectmen's hearing room. She will design a flyer and compile the final invitation list with Commissioner Carney and then Christine Bongiorno will send them out because that should have more impact than the invitations would just coming from AHRC.

10) Middlesex Partnerships for Youth Conference

This is a daylong training on March 26. Commissioner Carney reported that she and Commissioner DiFiglia will try to go.

11) Panel Discussion for Gender Identity Bylaw Change

Commissioner Goldsipe reported that this event will be Thursday, April 14, 7-9 pm at the Arlington Senior Center. She met with participants earlier in the week to sketch out plans for the event. Speakers include Commissioner Goldsipe, an emcee, a trans adult, a trans health care worker from Fenway Health, and a True Story Theater performance in place of a traditional Q&A. If there is no trans youth for the panel, anonymous stories from trans/gnc youth will be shared. Commissioners Goldsipe and Carney will coordinate the event on site.

12) Additional Resources for the Website

Commissioner Degboe recommended adding a link to the Diversity Task Group's resources page.

13) Facing History and Ourselves Community Dialogue

Commissioner Grossman reported on the meeting with FAHO representative, Dustin Tenreiro, and Commissioner Horowitz. It was decided that the AHRC would partner with FAHO for an event in May 2016. The theme is how to make Arlington more inclusive. The event would be the showing of the TED Talk video "Danger in a Single Story" and a facilitated discussion afterwards. FAHO would take care of all the details, aside from securing the space. The cost for FAHO is \$500.00. Commissioner Grossman made a motion to allocate up to \$500 to be paid to FAHO for this event. Commissioner Huvos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Commissioner Horowitz will contact the Robbins Library and secure the Community Room for the event.

14) Arlington School Committee/AHRC Joint Subcommittee

Commissioner Grossman reported that the joint committee found that "while there is a higher rate of suspension for students of color than white students, it is similar to the rates seen in comparable communities." The summary approved March 3 is attached.

Commissioner Goldsipe moved to accept the summary report. Commissioner Logan seconded and it passed unanimously.

Commissioner Horowitz moved to disband the AHRC subcommittee. Commissioner Logan seconded and it passed unanimously.

15) Community Updates and Happenings

- March 24 in Belmont: Panel on Muslims in America. Commissioner Horowitz will send ARHC information about the event.
- March 31 at 7 pm, Arlington Center for the Arts: Stereotypes exhibit reception
- April 7 at 7 pm, Arlington Town Hall: Unconscious Bias, a Diversity Task Group event open to the public. The exhibit is already open weekdays through April 15 from 9 am to 6 pm.
- April 12, 5:30-8: True Story Theater would like one or two people to represent AHRC in a promotional video for the Living Brochures project. Commissioner Huvos volunteered if they could be flexible with the recording time.

Commissioner Horowitz moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Degboe seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 9:30.

Submitted by Mel Goldsipe and Christine Carney, Commissioners

**Summary of Arlington School Committee/Arlington Human Rights Commission
Joint Subcommittee
Discussed and approved March 3, 2016**

The Joint Subcommittee of the Arlington School Committee and Arlington Human Rights Commission agree that the work to look at whether there is disproportionality in the rates of suspension experienced by students of color in the Arlington Public Schools has been concluded. While the Subcommittee discussed many other issues over the course of our work together, we agreed that the goal of the Subcommittee needed to be our only focus. After meeting five times our conclusion is that, while there is a higher rate of suspension for students of color than white students, it is similar to the rates seen in comparable communities. Our examination of the number of students from group homes located in Arlington that were suspended contributed to the higher proportion of suspended students of color. The Arlington Public Schools has in place a program that supports and educates students from group homes in their transition to Arlington High School. Since the implementation of the program, the number of out of school suspensions has decreased. As we know, these students come to us with serious social and emotional needs.

We would like to thank the School Administration for the sharing of data and anecdotal information, and participation in this process. While we believe there is more work to be done to make sure all students' needs are addressed and to make the Arlington Public Schools a more welcoming environment for all students, much has already occurred and we expect that this work will continue.